

REMARKS

Claims 1, 4-9, 11, 14-20, 23, 25, 27-31, 60, 62-65 and 69-71 are currently pending in this application. By this amendment, Claims 1, 5, 69 and 71 have been amended. No new matter has been added by this amendment. In view of the amendments above and the remarks to follow, reconsideration and allowance of this application are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action mailed November 21, 2005, Claim 69 was objected to by the Examiner because the recitations of "a lock..." in line 4 and "the lock..." in line 8 suggested that two locks should be recited instead of just one lock. Claim 69 has been amended to focus the claim language to a single lock. Applicants respectfully request that this objection be withdrawn.

Applicants would like to thank Examiner Williams for her time and consideration extended to Applicant's representative, Mr. Christopher Trainor, during the personal interview on March 1, 2006. During the interview, U.S. Patent No. 6,171,284 to Kao et al. ("Kao") was discussed. It was agreed that Kao failed to disclose a monolithic needle hub having an integrally formed collar defining an interior cavity such as recited in independent Claim 1 and substantially as recited in independent Claims 5, 69 and 71.

In the Office Action, Claims 1 and 4 were rejected over 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Kao. As discussed above, Kao fails to disclose a medical needle shield apparatus having, inter alia, a monolithic needle hub including an integrally formed collar extending distally from the needle hub and defining an interior cavity as recited in Claim 1. Thus, Claim 1 is also patentable over Kao. For at least this same reason, inter alia, Claim 4, which depends from Claim 1, is patentable over Kao.

In the Office Action, Claims 5-9, 11, 14-18, 20, 25, 27-29, 63, 65, 69 and 70 were rejected over Kao in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,950,250 to Haber et al. ("Haber"). Claims 1, 5-18, 20, 23, 27-31, 60, 62, 63, 65, 69, 70 and 71 were also rejected over Haber or U.S. Patent No. 5,951,525 to Thorne et al ("Thorne") in view of Kao and Claims 19 and 64 were rejected over Kao in view of Haber or Thorne. As discussed above, each of independent Claims 1, 5, 69 and 71 recites a medical needle shield apparatus having, inter alia, a monolithic needle hub having an integral collar defining an interior cavity. As agreed in the interview, Kao fails to disclose such structure. It is respectfully submitted that neither Haber nor Thorne cure the deficiencies of Kao. More specifically, in Haber and Thorne, the needle cover or protector is integrally formed with the needle hub. As such, neither Haber nor Thorne disclose a monolithic needle hub including an integrally formed collar defining an interior cavity as recited in Claims 1, 5, 69 and 71. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that independent Claims 1, 5, 69 and 71 are patentable over Kao, Haber and Thorne, taken alone or in combination. Further, Claims 4, 6-19, 20, 23, 27-31, 60, 62-65 and 70 depend either directly or indirectly from one of independent Claims 1, 5, 69 and 71. Thus, for at least the reason discussed above, dependent Claims 4, 6-18, 20, 23, 27-31, 60, 62-65 and 70 are also patentable over Kao, Haber and Thorne, taken alone or in combination.

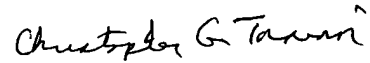
Early and favorable reconsideration of this application is respectfully requested. Should the Examiner feel that a telephone or personal interview may facilitate resolution of any

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remaining matters, he is respectfully requested to contact Applicant's attorney at the number indicated below.

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Respectfully submitted,



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